

HOME READING.

Idle Words.

Idle words!
Idle heart.
Idle life.
Idle thoughts.
Idle love.
Idle tears.
Idle words!
Idle words!
Idle words!
Idle words!

For the Citizen
Sea Yarns.—No. 16.

BY UNXHOOK

(Concluded)

of the gentlemen of England who live alone at sea, very few, I suspect, would have a cockroach, although they found medicinal in their soup—as I have done more than once. Cockroaches are of two principal kinds—the small, nearly an inch long; and the large, nearly two and a half inches. Let the reader fancy to himself a common vessel of our own country, half an inch in breadth, and of the length just stated; the body, bending in two forks, which project beyond the wings, the head, furnished with powerful mandibles and two feelers, nearly four inches long, and the whole body of a dark brown or gun barrel colour, and he will see as good an idea as possible of the gigantic cockroach. The legs are of enormous size and strength, taking fifteen to twenty ants to carry one away, and furnished with blistles, which pierce the skin in their passage over one's face; and this sensation, together with the horrid smell, is generally sufficient to awaken a sleeper of moderate depth. On these legs immense squares, walking with his elbows spread out, like a practical agriculturist writing an amateur epistle to his lady-love, except when he raises the forepart of his body, which he does at times, in order the more conveniently to stare you in the face. He prefers walking at a slow and respectable pace; but if you threaten him by shaking your fist at him, or using opprobrious terms to him, it is very "funny" to see how quickly he takes the hint, and hurries off with all his might. What makes him seem more ridiculous is, that he does not appear to take into consideration the comparative length of your legs; he seems impressed with the idea that he can easily run away from you; indeed, I have no doubt he would do so from a greyhound. The creature is possessed of large eyes; and there is a funny expression of conscious guilt and impudence about his angular face which is very amusing; he knows very well that he lives under a ban—that, in fact, existence is a thing he has no business or lawful right with; and consequently he can never look you straight in the face, like a honest fly or ant.

The eggs, which are nearly half an inch long, and about one eighth of an inch wide, are laid transversely at the upper edge, and the two sides approach, wedge-like, to form the over-side, which is sharp and serrated, for attachment to the substance on which they may chance to be deposited. These eggs are attached by one end to the body of the cockroach; and when fully formed, they are placed upon any material which the wisdom of the mother deems fit for the youthful inmates. This may be either a dress-scarf, a cocked-hat, a park, a biscuit, or a book, in fact, anything softer than stone; and the egg is no sooner laid, than it begins to sink through the substance below it by an eating or dissolving process, which is probably due to the agency of some free acid; thus, salines very often (I may say invariably) have their finest uniform coats, and dress-scarfs embossed by numerous little holes, better adapted for purposes of ventilation than embellishment. The interior of the egg is transversely divided into numerous cells, each containing the larva of I know not how many infant cockroaches. The egg gives birth in a few weeks to a whole brood of triangular little beetles, which gradually increase till they attain the size of huge beetles, striped transversely black and brown, but as yet minus wings. These are usually called a different species, and called the new cockroach, but having a suspicion of the latter, I one day imprisoned one of these in a crystal tumbler, and by and by had the satisfaction of seeing, first the beetle break his own back, and secondly, a large winged engorged scorpion, with a little difficulty, through the wound, looking rather out of breath, in the exertion. On first escaping, he was perfectly white, but in a few hours got disengaged down to his humble-bumble colour. So much for the appearance of these pretty novices for their character, which however, as you may have summed up: they're cunting as the fox, greedy as the glutton, impudent as the serpent, treacherous, cowardly scoundrels addicted to drinking, arrant thieves; and not only eat each other, but even deviate with gravity their own legs, when they undergo accidental amputation. They are very fond of eating the toenails; so fond indeed, as to render the nail-scissors of no value, and they also profess a penchant for the epidermis—if I may be allowed a professional expression—of the feet and legs; not that they object to the skin of any other part of the body, by no means; they attack the legs merely on a principle of easy convenience.

In no way is their cunning better exhibited than in the cautious and wary manner in which they conduct their attack upon a sleeper. We will suppose you have turned in to your swinging cot, tucked in your toes, and left one arm uncovered, to guard your face. By and by, first a few spies creep slowly up the bulkhead, and take a look at you; if your eyes are open, they slowly retire, trying to look as much at them as possible; but if you look round, they run off with such ridiculous haste, and awkward length of steps, as to warrant the assurance that they were up to no good. Pretend, however, to close your eyes, and soon after, one bolder than the rest, walks down the pillow, and stations

himself at your cheek, in an attitude of silent and listening meditation. Here the waters, or the wind among the forest-trees, stands for a few seconds, then cautiously and on looking up, you find the bullock-head, now black or rather brown, with the rustling you remain quiescent, the experiment is repeated; if you are still quiet, then you are supposed to be asleep, and the work of the night begins. The spy walks off in great haste, and soon returns with the working party. The hair is now searched for drops of oil; the ear is examined for wax, in sound sleepers, even the mouth undergoes scrutiny; and every exposed part is put under the operation of gentle skinning. Now is the time to start up, and batter the bulkheads with your slipper; you are sure of half an hour's good sport; but what then? the noise made by the brutes running off brings out the rest; and before you are aware, every crevice or corner vomits forth its thousands, and the bulkheads all around are covered with racing, chasing, fighting, squabbling cockroaches. So numerous, indeed, they are at times, that it would be no exaggeration to say that every square foot contains its dozen." If you are wise, you will let them alone, and go quietly and philosophically to bed, for you may kill hundreds, and hundreds more will come to the funeral-feast. So the sailors say: "Let them sweat, and sweat they do, and the least said about that is the better. Cockroaches are cannibals, practically and by profession. This can be proved in many ways. They eat dead bodies of their slain comrades; and if any one of them gets sick or wounded, his companions, with a kindness and consideration which cannot be too highly appreciated, speedily put him out of pain, and again on the 14th. On Good Friday, as Mr. Allen was coming down the steps off the house, he slipped and plunged head first to the quarter deck, striking the top of his head on one of the large ring-bolts to the booby-hatch, bursting his scalp in a terrible manner. He was carried below, unconscious, and had the skin sewed up and dressed. Fortunately the skull was not injured. By night we were again under reefed topsail, the gale growing stronger hourly. On the 18th an owl and two other land-birds from the coast of France, and blown to sea, came aboard. I tried to catch the owl which clung to the post after rigging, but had to consume so much time in preparing a safety rope to cling to the big beaming rail on the port side and terrible seas dashing over continually from the starboard, that before I could reach the shrouds, the poor little fellow lost strength, and just as my hand touched him, he gave a last despairing cry, let go, and was instantly engulfed in the huge sea. The mate succeeded in catching one of the other birds, but foolishly put it in a cage with a hole in the top, through which it escaped and was drowned also in the waves.

On the 19th we were under a reefed mainsail, main staysail with the boom off, lower topsail, and fore staysail staysail, everything else being in. At midnight of the 20th it was a dead calm. On the 21st we had a succession of rain and hail squalls with piercing cold weather. On the 22d we saw two very large rainbows at the same time, one beside the other, not above one another. At 7 p. m., we made the light at Ushant on the coast of France. On the 23d there were 16 vessels in sight. At 11 p. m., we made the Lizard. On the 24th there were fully 100 vessels in sight, and from 1 to 3 p. m., we were dodging in and out among a host of fishing boats. On the 25th we took a "Mad Pilot," who brought us to the Forlands, where the regular pilot came aboard. He told us the Parker had been in a week having skipped up the channel just before the gale. Soon after the arrival of the pilot a tug threw a line and carried us up to the Downs where we anchored for the night, proceeding to our berth in the East Indies Company's dock the next morning, where I will leave you, having told you of my trip around the world, which consumed 234 days of actual sailing.

The Midget Sheep.

The very smallest of all the kinds of sheep, says a contemporary, is the tiny Breton sheep. It is too small to be very profitable to raise, for of course it cannot have much wool, and as for eating, why a hungry man could almost eat a whole one at a meal. It is so small, when full-grown that it can hide behind a good-sized bucket. It takes its name from the part of France where it is most raised. But not a profitable sheep, either, because it would have been more trouble to look another way. The young lady in the stern was Miss Josephine Vail, and the boy at the oars was her twelve-year-old brother. Josephine was a young lady of views, supported by more or less logic and by what some plainly thought better, an extremely pretty face. Her enemies—but she had none—would have said that while she despised conventionalities, she was more than willing when obliged to disregard them; and while she resented the protecting limitations of her sex, she was quite willing to accept the attentions based on the theory of their existence. Her father had said one day, "Nothing would take the kinks out of our Josephine." The young lady took it in high dudgeon, and went away meekly to wonder if it were true. On this particular July morning Josephine accepted her brother Tom's services as oarsman, not because she was not perfectly well able to row herself, but because it would keep Tom out of mischief.

"Don't rock the boat, Tom. It doesn't frighten me, but I can't read."

There was a pause.

"Row near the bank in the shade, Tom."

Another longer pause.

"Say, sis," said Tom, at length, "how we're off. I'll tell you where we're going."

"Where you're going? Why, you're going to take me out for a row?"

"Not much. I'm going two miles up above to see some fellows who are camping out."

"And going to take me? I think you're mistaken, sir. Give me those oars."

"No, you don't. Leave em alone, and sit still."

"Tom, turn this boat instantly, or I'll—"

"What'll you do? Come now; you sit still, or I'll—"

A thought seemed to strike Tom.

"Come, keep cool, Jo. We'll go up a piece further, anyway. I won't take you up to the camp if you don't want to go. You don't want to go back yet awhile, do you?"

"Tom, there's the Desert Isle just ahead. Don't run into it. Be careful; you're going straight toward it."

"We might land there," said Tom blandly.

"To be sure, we might," said his sister, glad of anything to divert him from the first scheme.

"All right, just as you say."

Tom turned his boat toward the great rock which lifted its broad back out of the water. It was fitly called the Desert Isle, for its few square feet of surface supported not so much as a blade of grass or a bit of moss.

"Hop out," said Tom: "I've got to see to the boat. I guess you can climb up to the top easy enough."

"Of course I can," said Josephine; "as if I needed your help, you little monkey!"

In a moment she stood at the top of the rock, and in another moment a derisive laugh came from below.

"Good-by, Jo; I hope you'll enjoy yourself. I'll see you later."

Plato says, "A boy is the most vicious of all wild beasts." Plato and Miss Vail were of one opinion. She looked about her and took in the situation. She was monarch of about twenty five square feet of rough gray rocks, the sides of which descended abruptly to the water. Perched high on this massive pedestal, her figure stood out against the sky in bold relief. A book and parasol were her only accessories, for by some happy inspiration she had clung to these. The sun was high in the heavens, but its hot rays were mercifully tempered by a soft breeze on the lake.

Josephine seated herself, raised her parasol and opened her book. She faced the probability that at least two hours of noon-

A Desert Isle.

It was ten o'clock of a July morning, and larger fraction of humanity had been lowering one cooler, he tickles your face; if black or rather brown, with the rustling you remain quiescent, the experiment is repeated; if you are still quiet, then you are supposed to be asleep, and the work of the night begins. The spy walks off in great haste, and soon returns with the working party. The hair is now searched for a cockroaches' ball, which if not so bright as the butterfly ball of my early recollections I have no doubt is considered by themselves as very amusing and highly respectable.

On Sunday, the 10th, we had a very narrow escape. We were running against a tremendous current of 9 knots, with a heavy sea, when a log 12 feet long and 14 inches square passed within two feet of our bows and grazed the vessel amidships. Had it struck the bow it would have made a fearful hole and perhaps sunk the vessel.

On the 11th we had the mainsail and

topsail reefed, having heavy squalls in the morning and northwest winds afterwards.

On the 12th we were surrounded by porpoises that kept us company all night, and again on the 14th. On Good Friday, as

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day soliloquy were before her. The only public speech course of action was to make the best of it. But what a situation to be in! She remembered with satisfaction that a large party had gone on a picnic to day, and the dowagers left behind were not given to boating at high noon, say? But I liked it, nevertheless. Here Rutland and Mrs. Mary. Let's tell them the story. They know we're going to Lake Winnipaka for our honey moon."—Wellesley County.

How to Dine.
The late Sam Ward, that apostle of refined epicureanism, is creded by Howard Paul with the following rhythmic composition embodying the principles of the gastronomic art, and which he states was written about two months before Mr. Ward's death. What a treat the reading of the lines suggests to a bon vivant!

"Always have lobster sauce with salmon. And put mint sauce your roasted lamb on. Veal cutlet dip in egg and bread crumb. For till you see a brownish red come. Grate Gruyere cheese on macaroni. Make the top crisp but not too brown. In venison gravy add a little jello. Macaroni, or—see Francatelli. In dressing save mind this law—With two hard yolks use one that's raw. Roast veal with rich stock gravy serve; And pickled mushrooms, too, observe! Roast pork, sans apple sauce, past doubt, Is Hamlet with the Prince left out. Your mutton chops with paper cover. And make them amber brown all over. Broil lightly your beetroot—try it. Argue with the Frenchman's diet. Kidneys in them in S. H. Mumme's champagne. Buy stall-fed pigeons; when you've got them, The way to cook them is to pot them. To roast spring chicken is to spoil 'em. Just slit 'em down the back and broil 'em. It gives true pictures the vapors. To see boiled mutton mince capers; Boiled turkey, gourmands know, of course is exquisite with capers. The cook deserves a hearty cuffing. Who serves meat foul with tasteless stuffing. Sausage, onions eggs and biscuits powder.